WILLIAM J HUGHES TECHNICAL CENTER




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News Briefs

Advanced Imaging earns 2003 Communicator Award

The Advanced Imaging Television Production Team at the William J. Hughes Technical Center has won the *2003 Communicator Crystal Award of Excellence* for its most recent video production, the "ACB NEXCOM Program". The Communicator Awards are an international awards program that was founded by communications professionals to recognize excellence in the field of communications. The award is given to those entries whose ability to communicate is among the best in their field. Congratulations!

American Red Cross Blood Drive

QUARTERLY BLOOD DRIVE COMING IN APRIL

The American Red Cross conducts a quarterly blood drive at the William J. Hughes Technical Center during the months of January, April, July and October. Blood drives usually take place on the second Thursday and Friday of the month.

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Air & Space Museum Unveiled

This is the new Smithsonian National Air & Space Museum's Steven Udvar-Hazy Center at Dulles International Airport.

Mike Roames is shown viewing the Enola Gay. If you get the chance, ask Mike to tell you about his family connection to this very famous aircraft.

Hank Weber and Jimmy Vena were on the team that created the FAA exhibits.

See CENTERFOLD for the story.

Inside

Activity Value Analysis (AVA) Underway

By Pete Castellano

The following is an excerpt from **Chief Operating Officer Russ Chew's** message to all Air Traffic Organization (ATO) employees, dated February 26.

"The Activity Value Analysis (AVA) for Headquarters is fully underway. This six-month process began with the AVA team interviewing employees and ATO customers on February 12. AVA will help us determine – in great detail – work activities that contribute to services and products most valued by our customers. I know a lot of confusion and concern still surrounds this process. I've been told that people are still afraid of losing their jobs and may be reluctant to participate in the AVA. The AVA is not about losing jobs. It's a process of discovering what activities produce the most value to our customers in terms of products and services. With the results, we can find out if people are working on things that provide little or no value to the customer, and move them to activities that contribute to more highly valued services. It's a classic win – win situation. The customer benefits by obtaining better services and products and employees win from knowing their work is valued."

Editor's note: For purposes of the ATO, Headquarters includes the Technical Center and the Aeronautical Center. The AVA team will finish this initial data collection on March 19 and brief the ATO vice presidents on March 30. By that time the AVA team will have a pretty good idea of the products our customers use and the products the ATO produces. Next, the team will put the data to work by comparing the ATO and the customer data.

Steve Brown Speaks with Center Employees

By Pete Castellano

ATO Vice-President for Operations Planning, Steve Brown, speaks with employees at the William J. Hughes Technical Center on February 26.

The Air Traffic Organization's (ATO) recently named **Vice-President for Operations Planning, Steve Brown,** made a return visit to the William J. Hughes Technical Center on February 26. He is the executive over several organizations at the Center, including the former ACT and AAR. His first visit in his current role was on January 22, when he toured numerous labs and facilities, and met with as many employees as possible in their workplace. Mr. Brown spent a significant amount of time, during his visit, in meetings with Center managers, including **Center Director Anne Harlan.**

The centerpiece of this visit was an all-hands meeting that was held in the Auditorium. Mr. Brown spoke for approximately 30 minutes, before opening the floor for another 30 minutes of questions from the audience. A number of significant issues were highlighted.

Fifty-five senior ATO managers have received financial training, which included private sector concepts not normally covered in government training. The purpose of this training is to help the ATO more accurately report on the accomplishment of goals. A structure is being established to link the safety functions performed in the FAA with the safety functions conducted within the ATO. The ATO will soon embark on a 'customer outreach' initiative, with the goal of having our external customers reach a consensus on the priorities they expect from the ATO in a time of limited resources. By doing good work and proving ourselves, the ATO hopes to gain credibility, which in turn can be used to seek more flexibility to manage resources in a more businesslike manner.

Mr. Brown praised the Technical Center, not only in terms of our physical plant and laboratory capabilities, but also in terms of our extraordinary human capital. He sees the Center as an integral part of the ATO. His remarks were well received, and we look forward to future visits.

Technical Center Hosts Scott Air Force Base Personnel

By Ginger Cairnes

The FAA and the Department of Defense (DOD) traditionally have worked together to enhance the operational safety, security, efficiency and capacity of air transportation in both the National Airspace System (NAS) and in foreign flight information regions (FIRs). With commercial air travel expected to grow at a rate of 5% per year over the next 20 years, such cooperation is increasingly more important.

On January 22, the William J. Hughes Technical Center hosted top-level air traffic management and technical program personnel from Scott Air Force Base. The purpose was to try to forge an interagency agreement to create a framework for a strategic partnership between FAA and DOD that will allow for cooperative activities that can contribute to the evolution of the NAS for both commercial and military use.

Initially, this will be an exploratory effort to determine the strengths and capabilities of each agency and possible areas of collaboration. The ultimate intent is to reach an agreement that is broad enough to allow participation by various FAA and DOD organizations, including the Air Force Air Mobility Command, other Air Force organizations and the Technical Center.

Our visitors met with domain directors and subject matter experts and visited the Advanced Technology Oceanic Procedures (ATOP), Oceanic, Display System Replacement (DSR), Standard Terminal Automation Replacement System (STARS), Enhanced Traffic Management System (ETMS), Free Flight Technology Integration Laboratory (FFTIL) and the Human Factors laboratories. The day concluded with a recap of the day's events and an agreement on the next steps that need to be taken.

AISES Conference Highlights

Rick Ozmore (left) and Jay Fox hosted the recruitment booth at the American Indian Science & Engineering Society's (AISES) National Conference in Albuquerque, NM.

Students review recruiting materials at the AISES Conference. More than 2000 people, including many students seeking internships or entry-level positions, visited 200 exhibit booths that were sponsored by public and private entities.

Systems Engineering Community of Practice

By George DeLuca

When **Clif Baldwin** spoke with **Systems Engineering Division Manager Basilyn Bunting,** at the International Council on Systems Engineering (INCOSE) conference in July 2003, he had no idea he was about to form a group that would come to be known as the Systems Engineering Community of Practice (SECoP). **Ken Kepchar**, the William J. Hughes Technical Center's chief system engineer, also had no idea he had issued a phantom challenge to Clif and Basilyn.

INCOSE is a not-for-profit membership organization founded in 1990. It is an international authoritative body that promotes the application of an interdisciplinary approach and means to enable the realization of successful systems. INCOSE is in the early stages of developing a professional certification process for the worldwide community of system engineers, and already has developed a handbook of best practices for systems engineering, which is now being revised.

SECoP is a group of 12-15 members who volunteer their time, once a week, to meet and discuss systems engineering topics. It is made up of members from the Systems Engineering Division, as well as other Federal employees and contractors from other organizations.

Clif's challenge was to prepare a group of system engineers at the Technical Center to pass the INCOSE certification process. In order to accomplish this, he formed a "Community of Practice" to study systems engineering practices as well as the INCOSE Handbook. A community of practice allows employees with similar skills or interests to share their knowledge. Clif hopes to use this concept to allow the members of SECoP to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to qualify as Certified Systems Engineers.

Currently, INCOSE is revising the INCOSE Handbook to version 2A, which is due for release in June or July 2004. Clif is also working to have SECoP review the Risk Management section of version 3 of the INCOSE Handbook, which will focus on disruption of schedule, costs and technical issues. Version 3 should be completed some time in 2005.

While they wait for the next version of the INCOSE Handbook, the SECoP group is reviewing the FAA System Engineering Manual (SEM). First, they plan to focus on the Risk Management section of SEM 4.10 to help prepare them for the review of the Risk Management section of the INCOSE Handbook. Afterwards they plan to cover the remainder of the SEM before version 2A of the INCOSE Handbook is released in July 2004.

Anyone interested in joining SECoP, can contact Clifton Baldwin at extension 4832. You don't have to be a system engineer to join; you just need a desire to learn about systems engineering. The link for the System Engineering Manual is http://172.27.70.63/organization/ASD-100/SystemEngineering/SE_manual.cfm.

SATS: The Roadmap to Implementation

By Adam Greco

The William J. Hughes Technical Center hosted 14 executives and specialists from NASA Langley Research Center (LARC) and the National Consortium of Aviation Management (NCAM) last summer who are working on the Small Aircraft Transportation System (SATS) project. The team from the Technical Center offered a review of the Center's capabilities and presented a simulated demonstration of how SATS-equipped aircraft would function in the Philadelphia Flight Plan area. The successful experience that the Technical Center had in testing and implementing procedures similar to SATS was exactly what NASA Langley required at this stage. This was the first of many subsequent collaborative meetings and telecons between the various groups involved in this effort.

The SATS program is designed to provide relief for the air traveler who presently experiences congested airspace, long delays and expensive fares while traveling relatively short distances (e.g., 800 miles or less). SATS is a joint NASA/FAA/NCAM initiative to develop an alternative aviation transportation system with advanced navigational and communication technology, increased access to under utilized airports and a new generation of technologically advanced aircraft.

The parties involved agreed to engage in two specific activities: one terminal project and one en route project. The terminal project is the Joint FAA/NASA Langley Research Center Simulation and Evaluation of the SATS High Volume Operations

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Technical Center's CFC Total Exceeds All Previous Years

By Ginger Cairnes

The William J. Hughes Technical Center's Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) turned out to be an outstanding success this year. The slogan for this year's campaign was, "Giving is better than receiving". Employees responded generously through donations made by payroll deduction and monetary contributions. They also supported fund raising events that were held at the Center in October and November 2003.

The closeout for the 2003 campaign was held on February 18 in the auditorium. According to **2003 CFC Chairperson Pat Mabis**, the campaign collected a total of $148,731.62, a CFC record for the Technical Center. In fact, our 2003 donations exceeded our 2002 total of $137,189.39 by more than $11,500. We also exceeded our 2003 CFC goal of $110,000 by more than $27,000.

John Emge, Executive Director of the United Way of Atlantic County, acknowledges contributions made by the William J. Hughes Technical Center. Pictured left to right: Dr. Anne Harlan, Technical Center Director; Patricia Mabis, CFC 2003 Chairperson; Emge; and Oscar Ernst, Chairman, Combined Federal Campaign of Atlantic County.

This was accomplished by the hard work of a dedicated group of key people and volunteers who ran many activities that raised substantial amounts of money. Congratulations on a job well done!

SATS

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(HVO) project, which will simulate how several SATS-equipped aircraft operate in a Self Controlled Area (SCA) in the terminal environment, simultaneously with non-SATS equipped aircraft. The two airports selected for this project are Danville, VA and Cross Keys Airport, NJ. This simulation is scheduled to take place in the summer of 2004.

The second activity is called the Joint Controller Workload and Procedures Study of Self-Controlled Area NAS Integration, which will involve Technical Center participation and will measure the quantitative effects of multiple SATS-equipped aircraft in future years in an en route environment. Technical Center personnel will utilize a fast-time simulation tool called the National Airspace System Performance Analysis Capability (NASPAC) in several iterations over the next twelve months.

Above and left:The jet that is poised to define the next century of SATS flight, Eclipse Aviation's ground breaking Eclipse 500.

The FAA / NASA / NCAM will continue to partner by sharing resources and technical expertise in the advancement of this worthy transportation alternative.

Women's History Month

By Cathy Jaggard

As recently as the 1970's, women's history was virtually an unknown topic in the K-12 curriculum or in general public consciousness. To address this situation, the Education Task Force of the Sonoma County (California) Commission on the Status of Women initiated a "Women's History Week" celebration in 1978. March 8, which is International Women's Day, was selected as the focal point to ensure that the events and celebration would include a multicultural perspective, recognize the connection between and among all women, and celebrate the important role of women in the paid labor force.

In 1979, Molly Murphy MacGregor, then the Director of the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women, was invited to a Women's History Institute at Sarah Lawrence College to discuss the importance of using Women's History Week as a focal celebration to recognize and celebrate women's historic accomplishments. The conference was for leaders of women's and girl's organizations throughout the country. The participants decided unanimously to promote the idea of a Women's History Week within their own organizations, school districts, and states. They also agreed to work toward securing an official Congressional Resolution that would declare the week of March 8th as "National Women's History Week."

President Jimmy Carter issued a Presidential Message to the American people, in 1980, encouraging the recognition and celebration of women's historic accomplishments during the week of March 8th, Women's History Week. By the end of that year, then Representative Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) co-sponsored the first Joint Congressional Resolution that declared the week of March 8, 1981 as National Women's History Week.

Also in 1980, the National Women's History Project (NWHP) was founded by Maria Cuevas, Paula Hammett, Molly Murphy MacGregor, Bette Morgan, and Mary Ruthsdotter in Santa Rosa, CA as a nonprofit corporation. The goal was to provide a national clearinghouse for general information about women's history and for specific information about National Women's History Week celebrations. With the support and curriculum materials generated by the National Women's History Project, many state departments of education promoted programs for National Women's History Week. The National Women's History Project successfully

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Phyllis Schlegel taught a yoga class as part of this year's National Women's Month celebration at the Technical Center.

The FWP invited the Community Food Bank of New Jersey to participate in this year's National Women's Month activities to help raise funds for people who are less fortunate than we are, and to teach people about good nutrition practices.

Women's History Month

Continued from page 6

By Cathy Jaggard

petitioned Congress in 1987 to expand the national celebrations to the entire month of March. A National Women's History Month Resolution was quickly approved with strong bipartisan support in both the House and Senate. Since 1992, a Presidential Proclamation has carried the directive for what is now a major national and international celebration.

This year's National Women's Month celebration included a belly dancing class that was taught in the auditorium.

The Shadows Know…

By Mary Lou Dordan

Fifteen students and three instructors from the Atlantic City Institute of Technology enjoyed a full four hours of learning at the Tech Center during the Annual Job Shadowing Day held on February 2. All of the young visitors were full-time students focusing on Information Technology as a career field. The school prepares and motivates these students via a rigorous and specialized curriculum, community-based partnerships, and field-based experiences during the course of their study. The time spent with Technical Center employees was a valuable opportunity to utilize the skills they learned in the classroom.

Technical Center Director Anne Harlan welcomed the students upon their arrival at the Tech Center. The remaining four hours of their time was spent with their individual hosts who were specifically selected to "show them the ropes of life in the real world". A special "thank you" goes to the event coordinators, **Magda Colon**, Office of Innovations and Solutions, and **Mary Lou Dordan**, Office of Human Capital Strategies, and to the sponsors of this year's event. This year's sponsors were: The National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees, the National Black Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees, and the FAA Office of Human Capital Strategies.

A big thank you is also extended to the following team of volunteers at the Tech Center, who hosted these students and their instructors and so kindly shared their corner of the "real world" with them:

Michelle Tennant-Marcucci

Bill Malone

Jack Maida

Chris Reilly

Jill Reilly

Heidi Knowll

Robert Ellis

Rich Coughlin

Geri Desseaux

Kanan Satche

Nikki Dhannie-Frisby

Brian Colamosca

Bennett Flax

Gus Staparounas

David Chen

James Link

Stephanie Bell

John Paul Schilling

Missy Passmore

Jay Fox

Jeff Tuthill

Jennifer Duffy

Ruben Conde

Cheryl White

Center Employees Help Memorialize the History of Flight at New Smithsonian Museum

By Adam Greco

A cross-organizational team of employees from the William J. Hughes Technical Center, in conjunction with Norma Lesser at FAA headquarters, began working in 2002 on a project to create a permanent exhibit in the new Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum's Steven Udvar-Hazy Center at Dulles International Airport. The museum is a $300,000,000 complex consisting of a large hangar that houses 85 vintage aircraft, a 165-foot high control tower and an IMAX theater.

The FAA's exhibit is located on the sixth and seventh levels of the Donald Engen Memorial Tower. The exhibit consists of a Standard Terminal Automation Replacement System (STARS) controller workstation and 10 large graphic color panels, audiovisual units and display panels that explain the basics of air traffic control and the National Airspace System.

Two teams worked on separate parts of the same exhibit. One created the STARS Controller Work Station and the other created panels and visual exhibits. Adam Greco headed up the STARS team and Mike Roames headed up the panel exhibit team. Most of the work took place at the Technical Center in 2003. The material then was transported in time for the public opening on December 15, 2003.

The team from the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum (NASM), which included the curator, the exhibits director and the project lead,

visited the Technical Center in October 2003 to approve the final product. Because the museum has millions of visitors each year, the exhibit had to be easily accessible, explainable to the public, childproof and, above all, accident proof. These are requirements we do not normally encounter in our everyday work.

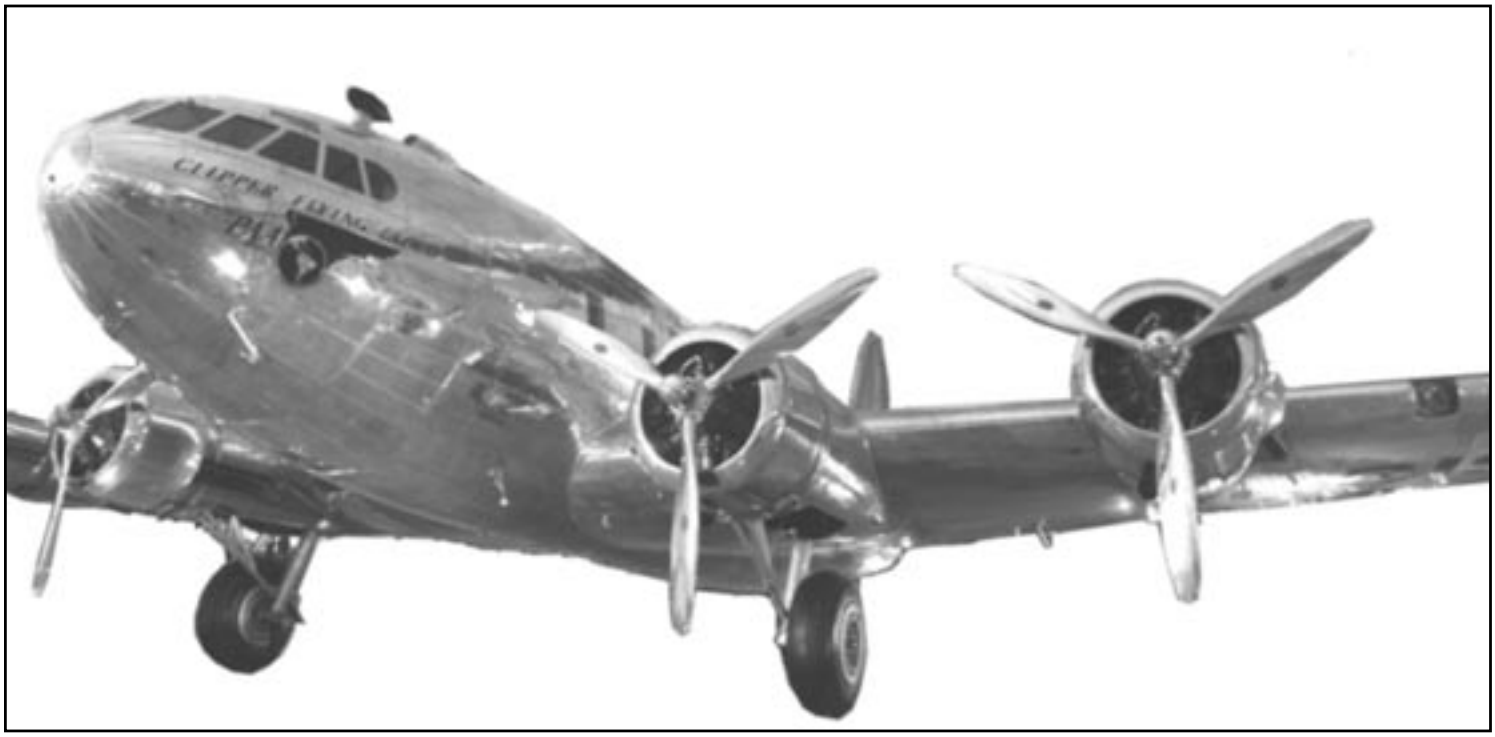
Despite working conditions that often were difficult, due to construction delays and other obstacles, the teams from the Technical Center regarded this project as extremely gratifying because they knew their work eventually would be viewed by millions of people in one of the most prestigious aviation museums in the world. The Smithsonian has asked members of the original Technical Center team to work on Phase 2 of the project, which involves adding real-time air traffic control state-of-the-art features to the observation deck on the 7th level of the Tower, as well as rehabilitating areas in the original NASM that is located in downtown Washington, DC.

The following Technical Center employees made significant contributions to this effort: Mike Roames, Laurie Zaleski, Carl Genna, Adam Greco, Nick Roselli, Mary Delemarre, A.J. Mieskolanian, James Vena, Hank Weber, Ron Boyden, Harry Krumaker and Ishmael Ortiz, with timely and immeasurable administrative support from Mary Granese.

More Photos From the ...

Laurie Zaleski (shown left) is shown in front of panel exhibit at the new Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center. Laurie took all the Smithsonian photographs in this edition of the Intercom.

The Clipper Flying Cloud (shown below) is one of many planes on display at the museum.



Creating the Air Transportation System for 2025

By Terry Kraus

On January 27, in a speech to the Aero Club, Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta warned, "without immediate and bold action, the bright dream that began at Kitty Hawk could soon become a nightmare of congested skies and frustrated travelers. That is why we are acting now to modernize and transform our air transportation and assure that this second century of aviation is one of promise and prosperity and continued leadership for America."

Secretary Mineta announced the Next Generation Air Transportation System initiative, a multi-year, multi-agency effort to develop the air transportation system for the year 2025 and beyond. The creation of this system will be as revolutionary and important to the nation as the creation of the Interstate Highway System proved to be for the 20th century. According to Secretary Mineta, "if the United States wants to retain its global air transportation leadership - and we do - we need to modernize and transform our air transportation system - starting right now."

In partnership with DOT, NASA, DOD, the Homeland Security and Commerce departments, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and experts from the public and private sectors, the FAA will prepare a *National Plan for the Transformation of Air Transportation.* This report will represent a unified public/private sector commitment to shape the policy and research necessary to ensure that our air transportation system results in more jobs, a strong economy and a more positive balance of trade.

A Senior Policy Committee, led by Secretary Mineta and comprising the heads of the other agencies, is overseeing this initiative. To coordinate this critical work, Secretary Mineta has established a Joint Planning and Development Office (JPDO) based at the FAA. John Kern serves as the office director. The JPDO reports to the Senior Policy Committee through the FAA Administrator. While the JPDO's work encompasses all aviation activities, such as airports, aircraft, and the air traffic management system, for administrative purposes, the JPDO will report to Chief Operating Officer, Russ Chew and coordinate with other FAA organizations through Jack Howell, the ATO's director of international relations and the FAA's principal representative to the JPDO.

"New ideas are always welcome," says Kern. The JPDO will serve as the "suggestion box" for gathering thoughts and proposals on what the future can be. "At the end of the day," according to Kern, "creating the next generation air transportation system is more than just improving aviation and how people and goods are moved from curb to curb – it is transforming the system we operate."

ISO Surveillance Audit of the Hardware Maintenance Group

By George DeLuca

The Hardware Maintenance Group at the William J. Hughes Technical Center was audited on January 26 by Wayne Biazek of the Quality Management Institute for compliance with the ISO 9000:2000 standards. The audit found no nonconformances.

Lou Spagnuolo's Group had four of its procedures and documentation examined in the audit. Three of the procedures were checked against four of the ISO 9000:2000 clauses, with the procedures meeting all of the ISO requirements. The remaining procedure also was found compliant. The Configuration Management Support Team provided the documentation required by the audit.

Clayton Carr, Jake Fowler, John Miller, Tim Schrig, Greg Esterlund and **George Ryckebusch** were the auditees who participated in the audit.

Division Manager **Mike Greco** wrote, "Wayne (Biazek) indicated that we have an exceptional quality system that is well documented and effective. Wayne noted on several occasions that our procedures were thorough, records were complete, auditees were well prepared, and our systems show significant improvement from the first ISO 9001:1994 audit." The next ISO Surveillance audits will be conducted on July 7-9.

Special Awards Presented for Technological Achievements

By Deborah Germak

Exciting and innovative ideas are emerging at the Technical Center, as evidenced by the Special Award of Appreciation for Technological Achievement that was presented to **Robert Filipczak** and to **Richard Lyon** at the ARA Awards Ceremony in October 2003. Each wooden plaque was etched with an impression of the first page of their patent, along with the signature of Norman Mineta, secretary of the Department of Transportation.

U.S. Patent No. 6,464,391 was granted for "Heat Release Rate Calorimeter for Milligram Samples" for efforts performed by Richard Lyon. The patent is for a "heat release rate calorimeter for milligram samples." Lyon knew that the rate at which heat is released during the burning of a solid, in a fire, is the primary indicator of its hazard to life and property. Fire calorimeters are used to measure the rate of heat released in flaming combustion. A slow-step of limiting the burning rate in flaming combustion of solids was needed to measure heat release rates of very small samples. Lyon's invention of a heat release rate calorimeter reduces the cost of fire testing by a factor of 1000, which helps to speed the discovery of new, ultra fire resistant plastics for aircraft interiors.

U.S. Patent No. 6,467,950 was granted for "Device and Method to Measure Mass Loss Rate of an Electrically Heated Sample" to Robert Filipczak. The patent is for a "device and method to measure mass loss rate of an electrically heated sample". Filipczak was decomposing a plastic test specimen that had a nichrome wire embedded in it, and wanted to know how fast the specimen was burning, or losing weight, to calculate the production of decomposition products (toxic gases) versus the amount of plastic that was being burned over time. Ordinarily, the wire leading to the sample would bend or deform causing erratic weight measurements, but the frictionless connector invented by Filipczak allowed energy to pass through it without hindering weight measurements.

Patents and Inventions

By Stan Ciurczak

Time magazine annually lists the top inventions of the year. In 2003, in the transportation category, there were four winners. One was the Gibbs Aquada; a seaworthy automobile that can do 100 miles per hour (MPH) on land and 30 MPH afloat, and powered by a proprietary jet-propulsion system that generates nearly a ton of thrust. A scooter called the Aqwon also made the list. It is the first-ever hydrogen-powered scooter to meet Germany's stringent regulatory standards and can hit 30 MPH with its two-stroke engine. Toyota made the list for the latest edition of the Prius, which has an Intelligent Parking Assist that allows the car to parallel-park itself. Also listed was Dan Hanebrink's ice bike, an alternative to skis, which has no plastic parts to freeze and shatter in extreme conditions; the ice bike is headed for a ride to the South Pole.

While the FAA did not make Time magazine's list, a number of important patents and inventions are produced by the agency each year, many by people who work right here at the Technical Center. The agency encourages the commercialization of its research and development (R&D) products or results, which are known as intellectual property. Inventions are among the most transferred intellectual properties, and may be protected by patents, which protect inventions and improvements to existing inventions, and allow inventors to use the legal system to protect and profit from their intellectual property.

Under the Technology Transfer Act, the FAA is required to support and encourage inventors to patent their ideas and technologies. "As a result, the FAA has its own portfolio of commercially viable, issued patents, based on the work of its scientists and engineers," according to Technology Transfer Program Manager **Deborah Germak**.

The Technology Transfer Program comes under the Technical Center's Office of Knowledge Management, and seeks to explore, evaluate and establish policies that lead to technical opportunities and possibilities for the Center. This office implements Center policy and direction for intellectual property and Technology Transfer, facilitates business risk analysis, process improvement, knowledge sharing and library services. The goal of the program is to transfer knowledge, facilities, equipment or capabilities developed by Federal laboratories or agencies to the private sector to expand the nation's technology base and maximize the return on investment in federally funded R&D. The purpose of the program is to help the private sector meet the challenges of the highly competitive global economic environment, along with providing FAA personnel assistance in achieving critical R&D goals or meeting objectives for under-funded mission needs.

Patents Awarded

Charles Keegan presented plaques to Robert Filipczak (photo at left) and Richard Lyon at the ARA Awards Ceremony. The plaques recognized that each of them was awarded a patent for their recent inventions.

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American Red Cross Blood Drive

The Technical Center is one of the largest pools of blood donors in the South Jersey region and has a history of meeting the blood collection goals of the Red Cross. Last year the Technical Center received the "Large Corporation Donor Award" for the Penn-Jersey region. The most recent goal for obtaining blood was 170 pints. The blood drive that was held here on January 15-16 resulted in 154 pints collected.

The blood supply in our region is continually at low levels, so each drive is critical to meeting blood inventory requirements. The blood types typically most needed are Type O negative and Type B negative. Type O negative is universal and can be given to anyone. One pint of blood will help save the lives of three babies. However, regardless of one's blood type, ALL Center employees are encouraged to support the blood drive at the Technical Center.

Watch for the announcement of the next blood drive in April.

GIVE BLOOD and SAVE A LIFE.

Agencies Must Collect Demographic Information From Employees Who Accept Buyouts or Early outs

FEDmanager (March 23 edition) reports that agencies will be required to report the age, gender, national origin, race and veterans' preference of employees accepting a buyout or early-out offer. The data will be analyzed to make sure that agencies are using their authorities in accordance with merit system principles, veterans' preference requirements and the President's Management Agenda.

According to OPM Director Kay Coles James, in a recent memo to the heads of departments and agencies, "These authorities were developed to make agencies more effective in their efforts to reshape their work force and to better position their agencies to fulfill changing duties and the nature of work." Under the Chief

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Employee Enrichment

By Ginger Cairnes

A little learning can be enlightening, as evidenced on February 5 when a group of employees and a few guests visited several facilities at the William J. Hughes Tech Center. This "event" is part of a series of "tours" that were organized by the Office of Human Capital Strategies and offered at the request of employees who wanted to learn more about research and development and other project work that is taking place at the Technical Center.

Facilities they visited included: the Airway Facilities Tower Integration Laboratory (AFTIL); the Research, Development and Human Factors Laboratory (RDHFL); the Next Generation Air/Ground Communication System (NEXCOM); the Full-Scale Fire Test Facility; the Drop Test Facility and the National Airport Pavement Test Facility. Feedback from the attendees was encouraging and confirmed the need for more such employee events.

Visitors appear dwarfed in front of the Wind Tunnel. Left to Right: Patrick Eigbe, Rick Astillero, Janice-Kay Cobb, Sharon Harris, Tarek El-Wakil, Doreen McClintock, Kim Astillero, Michael McClintock, Devon Esposito, Cassandra Miller and Jan Edwards.

Allan Abramowitz assists visitors across the ice from the cabin of the aircraft dropped July 30, 2003. This was the last opportunity for anyone to visit the ATR42-300 drop test item since it is being dismantled and put into salvage.

As evening approaches at Richmond Airport in the AFTIL "Out the Tower" lab, Bernie Garbowski explains how this lab is instrumental to the safety of airports and towers.

April Fools' Day

By George DeLuca

The history of playing pranks on unsuspecting people began in France, Great Britain and Scotland. It follows that all of these countries celebrate April Fools' Day. One theory of how April Fools' Day began traces back to France when Charles IX decreed in 1564 to change the beginning of the new year from April 1 to January 1. Under the old calendar, the change of the New Year was marked by a seven-day celebration that began on March 25 and culminated with the visiting of friends and family and the handing out of gifts on New Year's Day, April 1.

Some people did not agree with Charles the IX's decree and continued to celebrate the old week long celebration. They gradually became the target of prank gifts and jokes. Mock ceremonies were held outside their homes; some were even invited to phony New Year's celebrations in their honor.

The "sleeveless errand" grew out of this tradition. This was the practice of walking up to people and asking them if they knew the history of Eve's Grandmother; or sending people to the store to buy a quart of pigeon's milk or some sweet vinegar, or asking them for a stick with only one end. Obviously, there is no history of Eve's Grandmother; pigeons don't produce milk; vinegar isn't sweet, and a stick has two ends.

Pranks changed with the times. The sleeveless errands changed to asking people for left-handed screwdrivers, right-handed hammers or a necklace of chicken's teeth. Scotland even added to April Fools' Day by creating April Gowk Day where people were invited to a Gowk hunt. The prank, of course, is that there is no such thing as a Gowk.

The most common April Fools' Day prank can be traced to 1825 in England, when William Hone was credited with writing that boys would stop a man in the street and say, "Sir, if you please, your shoe is unbuckled." They would joyously shout "April Fool" when the man looked at his feet.

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News Briefs are compiled and written by Stan Ciurczak.

Agencies Must Collect Demographic Information From Employees Who Accept Buyouts or Early outs

Human Capital Officers Act of 2002, agencies were given expanded authority to offer early retirements as a way to delayer, restructure or reshape their work force to meet current skills needs. Prior to the act's passage, early retirements were available for use only as a means to avoid reductions-in-force (RIFs). The act also gives OPM authority to approve agency requests to offer buyouts, or voluntary separation incentive payments, to employees. Buyout authority previously could be obtained only through congressional and White House approval.

Federal Employee Dental, Vision and Hearing Benefits Under Study

According to The Washington Post, the House Civil Service Subcommittee recently approved and sent to the House Government Reform Committee a bill requiring the Bush administration to develop options for Congress to improve dental, vision and hearing benefits for Federal employees. The findings are due in a report to Congress by June 30.

OPM testified in February that dental and vision benefits were frozen around 1987 because OPM believed any coverage improvements should focus on hospital, surgical and similar medical benefits. The Post reported that OPM also is reluctant to add benefits to the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program because it would increase premium costs.

Feds long have indicated they need better dental and vision coverage, but these requests went ignored. This is the first time in years that a bipartisan House group has agreed to consider improving these benefits.

ATCA / FAA / NAV CANADA Technical Symposium

This year's Air Traffic Control Association (ATCA) technical symposium was held at the Sheraton Atlantic City on March 30-31. ATCA's annual FAA budget briefing was the kick-off session, and Dr. Victor Lebacqz (NASA) and Bill Dakota (NY / NJ Port Authority) delivered the luncheon addresses. Also featured were sessions on FAA Air Traffic Organization operations and challenges, global inter operability and many other technical topics.

Outsourcing

"MOST EFFICIENT ORGANIZATION" PROPOSED

The Federal Times (Jan. 19 edition) reports that a team of FAA employees is working with the Harris Corporation to win what it describes as, "one of the Government's largest and most controversial" A-76 job competitions. Harris plans to help the FAA employees it has teamed with (some 2,600 Automated Flight Service Station employees at 58 sites) to craft a Most Efficient Organization or "MEO," as allowed under A-76 rules.

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Are you interested in writing for the Intercom? If you are, please contact **Stan Ciurczak on extension 54789.**

Chris Seher Retires

By Ginger Cairnes

With the recent retirement of **Chris Seher**, the William J. Hughes Technical Center lost a dedicated worker and true friend. A retirement luncheon was held in his honor on March 4 at the Seaview Marriott Resort in Absecon, NJ.

Seher began his employment at the Technical Center as a co-op student from Drexel University. Seher worked for most of his career in the fields of airport and aircraft safety research and development, and aviation security research and development. He also paved the way for others to follow careers in these areas. In 1998 he was appointed as Director, Airport and Aircraft Safety Research and Development Program, a position he held until he retired from the FAA.

Chris and his wife, Arlene, are parents to four children, Keith, Faith, Gregory and Alison. Through the years they also have served as foster parents to about 10 young children. In fact, the Seher's currently have a 7-week old foster child, Stephanie, living with them.

Chris Seher's family help him celebrate his special day.

Dr. Herman A. Rediess presents Chris Seher with a Certificate of Service to the FAA.

In spite of a demanding work schedule that often required business travel, Seher still found time to participate in school and extra-curricular activities with his children as well as to serve in community organizations. He has served as a member and / or chairman of the New Jersey Expressway Authority, the Atlantic County Utilities Authority and the Absecon Zoning Board of Adjustment. The Absecon Jaycees named him the Jaycee of the Year in 1977.

Congratulations, Chris!

Remembering

We honor the passing of our former colleagues and friends. Rest in peace.

Myrtle Hinchman Newbauer, who retired from the FAA after working as a secretary at NAFEC, died on February 19.

Alfred Weidner, Jr. died suddenly in a motorcycle accident in Daytona Beach, Florida on February 29. Al worked at NAFEC for 20 years as a radar technician before going to work at the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center and then retiring from the FAA.

William J. Hughes Technical Center Intercom

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